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SUBJECT: POSSIBILITY OF FRANCHISING TRADE MISSION TO EUROPE

REF: PARIS 20827

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED POSSIBLE RECEPTIVITY IN BELGIUM TO USDOC SPONSORED SPECIALIZED TRADE MISSION IN FIELD OF FRANCHISING. BELGIANS ARE REASONABLY FAMILIAR WITH FRANCHISING AS INSTITUTION AND NUMEROUS AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FIRMS HAVE ALREADY PENETRATED BELGIAN MARKET BY THIS MEANS. WHILE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING AT PRESENT FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF SUCH TRADE MISSION THIS YEAR, WE BELIEVE THAT SCHEDULING OF SUCH MISSION IN FALL OF 1976 WOULD BE GOOD IDEA. HOPEFULLY ECONOMY WILL HAVE REVIVED AND INVESTORS AND ENTREPRENEURS WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO NEW IDEAS BEING BROUGHT TO BELGIAN MARKET BY TRADE MISSION, END SUMMARY.

2. ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY EXISTS IN BELGIUM FOR

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FURTHERING WORK OF TRADE MISSION. MAIN BODY QUOTE

COMITE BELGE DE LA DISTRIBUTION (BELGIAN MARKETING COMMITTEE) UNQUOTE HAS FORMED AN ASSOCIATE BODY CALLED QUOTE BELGIAN FRANCHISING ASSOCIATION UNQUOTE. THE ASSOCIATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH EUROPEAN FRANCHISING FEDERATION IS ORGANIZING SECOND EUROPEAN SYMPOSIUM ON FRANCHISING IN BRUSSELS ON OCTOBER 7-8, 1975. IN 1974 IT PUT ON A QUOTE OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS SHOW UNQUOTE. THE ASSOCIATION HAS NOW SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 11-15, 1976 THE QUOTE THIRD OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS SHOW UNQUOTE, UNDER GENERAL RUBRIC FRANCHISE 1976. THIS SHOW WILL BE HELD IN THE CONTEXT OF A MAJOR SALES EFFORT, VISUMAT 1976, WHICH IS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION.

3. IN DISCUSSION WITH OFFICIALS OF BELGIAN MARKETING COMMITTEE AND BELGIAN FRANCHISING ASSOCIATION, EMBOFF FOUND GENERAL RECEPTIVITY TO NOTION OF U.S. TRADE MISSION DEDICATED TO FRANCHISING WHICH MIGHT BE MERGED IN ACTIVITIES OF QUOTE OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS SHOW UNQUOTE. ONE POSSIBLE APPROACH WOULD BE TO RENT FLOOR SPACE IN SHOW, PROVIDE DESKS FOR MEMBERS OF TRADE MISSION ALLOWING THEM TO MEET WITH INTERESTED BUSINESSMEN, AND ORGANIZE SEMINAR BY MEMBERS OF MISSION FOR INTERESTED VISITORS. MR. BAPTIST, SECRETARY GENERAL OF BELGIAN MARKETING COMMITTEE, AND MR. JANSSENS, ADMINISTRATOR OF BELGIAN FRANCHISING ASSOCIATION, INDICATED THAT SHOW ATTRACTED FROM 500-750 HIGHLY INTERESTED AND MOTIVATED BUSINESSMEN. AMONG AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS WERE: BASKIN-ROBINS, DAIRY QUEEN, AND TANDY.

4. QUESTION OF MAKE UP OF TRADE MISSION IS MORE COMPLEX. BELGIAN OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT MUCH DEPENDED UPON TYPE OF FORMULA OFFER BY U.S. FIRMS AND WHETHER OR NOT ITS IDEA OR LINE HAS AS YET BEEN INTRODUCED INTO BELGIUM. AT PRESENT, HOTEL BUSINESS IN BELGIUM IS DEPRESSED WITH TOO MANY DELUXE HOTELS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY. RESTAURANT AND OTHER EATING CHAINS HAVE ALSO NOT DONE PARTICULARLY WELL ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CLEAR EXCEPTIONS IN CASE OF BASKIN-ROBBINS, FOR EXAMPLE, FIRM STARTED PILOT PROJECT AND HAS MADE VARIOUS ADAPTATIONS TO COMPLY WITH NEEDS OF BELGIAN MARKET IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

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5. IN CONCLUSION, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT COMMERCE CONSIDER FORMING TRADE MISSION ON FRANCHISING AND USE QUOTE OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS SHOW UNQUOTE AS CENTERPIECE FOR MISSION ACTIVITIES. IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT SHOW ATTRACTS MANY SMALL BELGIAN RETAILERS BUT ALSO FRAWS ON LARGER ENTERPRISES THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE.

6. MATERIAL AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION IS BEING POUCHED TO DIBA.
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